OFFICE LETTER

To	Bruce Crawford	Office	Date Sept 9th 1940
From	Roscoe W. Brown , Arbovale West	Va. Office	Referring to
Subje	ot Natural Setting : Pocahontas	Co History-3	File

Separate sheet for each subject. Omit all formalities. For office letters only.

Dear Mr, Crawford. I am mailing to you my report, and if there is any thing that is not right, or that you don, t understand pleas write me about the matter.

You will see one sheet of the land grantees, of Posshontas County it is alphabetic order, and is all that is recorded in the Land Grant Book of Posshontas No 1, in the letter A. There will be about a page of names in each letter of be the alphabet, This will show the names of the original land grantees by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Acres, local description, date of grant and Number of Grant Book page. This will carry us back to the Grant Books of Augusta and Bath Countys, of Virginia, but there are no mames in the letter A that is in the Bath County Books that covered the area of Posshontas County

This is only a suggestion of my own to have this index inserted in the Pocahontas history, it will show to the reader the names of the pioneers that took up the wild lands of Pocahontas County, and there is no better way to arrive at the names of the pioneers than this method; it would give a complete historical foundation. Please let me know by return mail if I should work

the eaven - EARLY LIFE AND OCCUPATIONS - CARROLL - LAW ---

The men and women who crossed the mountains to find homes of their own in the wooded valleys of Pocahontas County sentenced themselves to an existence of great rigor and hardship. They obtained their homes, to be sure, but that initial achievement probably was the easiest part of the battle. Life during the first years in the new land was a relentless struggle against the constant threats of starvation, disease, and the counter attacks of resentful savages.

There were no trades nor industries that were not a part of the home life.

The ambition of land-hungry men to see broad acres on every side procluded the development of community life and shut each household off into a world of its own. Within this self-imposed prison the frontiers man labored and her idremed of a day when sho wight ride proudly as one of the landed gentlemen.

of the new country.

The size and comfort of the pioneer home was limited not by the desires or needs of the family so much as by the skill and manpower available.

The men frequently went out alone or in small parties to prospect for their
farm sites. The cabins they built were the products of forest trees and

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lashed to the eaves. The superstitious were always careful to lay the roof in the light of the moon since one laid in the dark of the moon was sure to be ruined by warping of the boards.

Windows presented a serious engineering problem. Not only did they weaken the walls but they made the house less impregnable to Indian attack. Greased paper was the only glasing material available. Consequently many of the early cabins had no windows or were simply fitted with small loopholes between the logs. Moss and mud were used to caulk the chinks. However moss proved to be such a popular nesting place for mice and assorted vermin that its use was soon discontinued. The fireplace and chimney were frequently built of sticks heavily plastered with mud. Such a makeshift was usually replaced with stone after the family had become established.

Floors in the new homes were of clay or sand. Later the more progressive settlers installed rough puncheon floors. A novel arrangement was that in the Gibson cabin on Elk. A puncheon floor about 12 inches above the ground level covered all but the area surrounding the fireplace. This eliminated a serious fire hazard and provided a bench on which members of the family could sit about the fire.

Such casual disregard of formal furnishings was general along the fronier. To bring furniture across the Alleghenies on real to when outside fireplaces could not be used. This was but one of the countless duties of the pioneer housewife. Besides keeping the house, caring for the shildren, and helping with the farm work the wife and her older children had the task of providing clothing for the family. Cloth from the store was an almost unknown article. Every girl on the frontier was of necessity acquainted with the use of the spinning wheel, the loom, and various other implements for converting wool and flax stalks into cloth.

A choice bit of ground on each farm was reserved as the flax patch. The ripened stalks of flax were pulled by hand and subjected to three or four eachs of drying and weathering in an open field. The raw material was then tored until the frost of approaching winter had freed all hands from more mediate tasks. By means of the breaker, the scutching knife and the hackle, he woody part of the stalks was crushed and combed from the linen fiber. The course "ton" was woven into work clothes, grain sacks, and other articles abject to heavy wear. The finer linen was reserved for better clothing and muschold linens. The entire process, from planting to completion of the arment, took place within the limits of the individual homestead.

The ash hopper to be found outside the door was probably West Virginia's ret chemical plant. The hopper was constructed by placing boards in a lit log to form a V-shaped trough which was lined with straw. Ashes from

as for laundering and all other cleaning purposes.

and all other clenning purposes. Mrs. Mildred Shinaberry, who died in 1936 at the age of 93, loved to tall and the same of the same tell of the washday trials of the early Pocahontas housewife. Clothes were the state of the state of the said that the said said said said the said originally washed at the nearest creek and pounded clean on a flat rock. at et al pantacion an monta to relevant manager of this extent. As the settlements grew and skilled coopers moved in many families allowed The For The Price Printed to typical themselves the luxury of wooden tubs. During Mrs. Shinaberry's youth some The state of the property and the property of inventive genius originated a washboard which was simply a smooth plank in sellared cook a severe estack of macepiat sough took to wee astually. which horizontal grooves were cut. However, Mrs. Shinaberry and many of The dinus wishing includer came to the twice hade, caused the court the her neighbors scorned this threat to the honesty of their labors and con-Listens boto 1 that with a remission will plorest use bury between the tinued to use their hard-worked knuckles. The daughters of the family soon molitare with a friend flow in the a government. Into the other continu obtained one of these home-made miracles, and, in 1900, Lucy, the youngest, Arried this oppoint and bles there is the qualit mattle the infers was come became the owner of one of the first factory-made boards in the neighborhood. of the the for bles-it's true of the constant of the constant

The difficulties attached to laundering and bathing together with the beence of knowledge of sanitation made such practices much more infrequent han is now considered essential. Besides, in the minds of many such extense cleanliness was not only a waste of time but was quite dangerous as ell. Older residents of the Greenbrier Valley knew quite well that anyone colish enough to bathe his body or his head during the cold months from etober until April deserved the inevitably fatal results of such an underector.

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almost every cabin were hung with numerous herbs having real or imagined healing powers. There was hardly a man who had not performed some crude surgical operation at some time upon either his family or his live stock. "Yarb" doctors and midwives were numerous. Prs. Diena Saunders of Dry Branch is still remembered as one of the colorful members of this group. In his History of Pocahontas County, Dr. Wm. T. Price relates a typical aneodote of Granny Saunders. He relates that when he was about six weeks old he suffered such a severe attack of whooping cough that he was actually believed dead. Granny Saunders came to the Price home, dashed the apparently lifeless body into a tub of warm water and pierced his body between the shoulders with a razor. She inserted a goose quill into the chest cavity through this opening and blew through the quill until the infant was once more breathing for himself. Granny Saunders, "Aunt Teenie" Moore of Knapps Creek, and countless other pioneer women of the county did much to relieve the suffering of their neighbors. Thomas Bradshaw, son of the pioneer of funtersville, and John McNeil of Dry Creek administered aid in the form of . ot baths, bleeding, and practiced pharmacy according to the dictates of the so-called "botanical school." Also in this group was David Hannah of the Old Field branch of Elk, who is thought to be the first of these forestise practitioners to live in lower Pocahontas. No matter how dubiously hair methods are reserded today, these people played an important role in-

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surgery, he claimed, was performed upon a French soldier who had been shot through the stomach with a heavy ball. Observing that he must act quickly to save the man, Dr. Tacy ordered a sheep and proceeded to substitute the sheep's stomach for that of the soldier. The story continues that the operation was a complete success save that the patient entertained an over-whelming appetite for grass and other green forage for the rest of his days.

First graduate in medicine to locate in Pocahontas was Dr. George B.

Moffett who came to Huntersville in 1845. Dr. Matt Wallace began practice
at Will Point in 1858, Dr. John Ligon settled at Clover Lick, and Dr. S. P.

Patterson arrived in Huntersville at the close of the War between the States.

To survive in the early days of the county meant that every member of the family must work hard, days upon end without rest, at the numerous tasks about the farm. Technical skill and scientific methods were not in the vocabulary. Physical strength, disregard for bodily discomforts, and an agile brain trained by experience were the attributes of the successful pioneer. The weak died, for there was little pampering to prolong their lives. The importance placed on physical excellence is reflected in the prominence of such young men as Lewis Collins, Andrew Edmiston, and Thomas Johnson.

These men were the heroes of their day not because of brilliant achievements

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Through the worn law of survival of the fittest this physical stamina extended to the women and children as well. Children were considered the "Lord's will." Though there is, no doubt, considerable truth in the belief that large families were wanted to do the farm work, it is more probable that this fatalistic acceptance is largely responsible for the unbelievable size of many families of the early nineteenth century. For every woman who lived to the advanced ages acclaimed by historians, there were dozens of women who died at an early age from overwork and continuous childbearing. Families of less than five or six children were considered quite smell. Clark McCloud was the father of 21 children, and Timothy McCarty trailed this record with 20. Each of these men was married twice. Largest family of one couple on record was that of Clark and Phebe Mann of Indian Draft whohad 17 children, 16 of whom lived to adulthood. William and Mancy Wilson Eanless were the parents of nine daughters and seven sons; Samuel and Ann McGuire Haugh, early residents of The Hills, had nine sons and five daughters; Jacob and Mary Brown Laugh had 15 children of whom five lived to adulthood. Diphtheria, dysentery and countless other diseases took their toll, often " wiping out entire families. I ventured for the traces one of the post power

burning house. He dashed back and retrieved the baby from a mass of flame, which left both of them scarred for the rest of their lives.

Prior to the time of the War between the States the children had little education other than the small amount which they received at home. Among a goodly portion of the people there was a distrust of too much formal education. Those who sat about and read rather than busying themselves with some ranual task were rightly considered out of step with the era. The first schools were supported by the more ambitious and well-to-do families. School was held in one of the homes or in an abandoned cabin or shed. The teacher boarded around among the scholars, receiving little remuneration in addition to their room and board. The education of the teacher was frequently of the most informal nature. Many were persons who simply had access to a library and read until they felt that they had mastered the elementary subjects. William Barter of Edray, born in 1808, was the son of Col. John Baxter, owner of the largest library in the vicinity. The younger Baxter studied the contents of the hundred or more volumes on the three R's, religion, and allied subjects and ventured forth to become one of the most popular of the early pedagogues.

Reading material was limited in variety as well as quantity. The Bible, a few elementary text books and some religious works constituted the average collection. The Presbyterian and Methodist circuit riders brought in a large part of this material. The will of John Young, dated in 1843, lists a representative example of the libraries of the period:

"To my son John Young, the let. and Srd. volumes of Clark's Cormentary,

and sentation. These penetrating however often to dealers have made attended as the

also lat. and 3rd. vols. of Wesley's Sermons. To my daughter Jane Coohran, Moods Dictionary in two volumes, Simpsons Plea for Religion, and Fletcher's Appeal to Matter of Pact and Common Sense. To my daughter Sarah Ann Young, 2nd. volume of Clark's Commentary. To my daughter Martha Adkison, the 4th. vol. of Clarks Commentary. To my son Andrew Young, the remaining part of all of my printed books either new in my possession or loshed out to my neighbors."

William R. Moore appears to have been a scholar of his day. A bill of sale drafted in his name in 1865 includes: "Key to Ray's Arithmetic,"
Grammar, McGuffeys Third Reader, Ray's Algebra, Natural Phillosaphy, Conquests of the Bible, Medical Chemistry, Speller and Definer, Davies Surveying, Mitchels Geography, Phillosaphy and History, Walkers Dictionary, Tradesmans Companion, Mechanics Companion, One lot of books and pamphlets."

More important than formal education was practical experience in farming and household arts. The young folk of Pocahontas married at an early age in the pioneering days. Financial status was of little consequence. Istablishment of a new home cost little but labor and hardihood in the face of adversity, traits in which the pioneer youth had been conditioned since

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easure hunt in which a hydrocarbonous lady known as "Black Betsy" awaited a riders at the end of the trail.

Hearded linens and fine linsey dresses and shirts were the order of e day. In the evening young and old joined in the jigs and square dances. e local fiddlers dusted off "The Forked Deer," "Ing Boat," "The Lost Girl", ourwood Mountain," "Washington's March," "Cluck Old Men," "Turkey in the raw," and so many of the other old tunes that even the most tireless of e young bloods would finally stagger from the floor in a bedraggled state exhaustion. Meanwhile the new and old songs were echoing from the moonthillsides: "Oh, Susanna," "Earbara Allen," "Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt," d "Old Dan Tucker" maintained long-run popularity records.

The setting up in housekeeping of the new couple was likewise a comnity affair. The groom's neighbors joined him in building a cabin and
rue far more comfortable and substantial than the first settlers had been
be to piece together through months of unaided, back-breaking struggle.
In only obligation was a return of like service upon call. In like manner
of now famous husking bees, quilting parties, and harvest armies grew, comning the efficiency of coordinated labor with social gratification of
upple scattered among the lonely mountains.

Life in Pocahontas remained a constant fight against the wilderness

in his methods. Pields were cleared by cutting out the trees and brush by hand. After the dead brush and wood had been dragged into heaps and the surrounding area raked clean, a log burning would be announced. The burning was usually done at night after the evening breeze had died down. The waiting period was consumed in spelling bees, story telling, singing, tumbling exhibitions, or, if the crowd convened early enough to have sufficient light, one of the countless shooting matches.

At last the men would light their torches and dart among the brush piles, sending orange flames darting through the heaps. While the sooty and perspiring men guarded against flying embers their families continued the festivities by the light of the crackling fires. There were always a few maidens who formed a giggling audience for the capering, younger firemen. At such gatherings the young folk traded secret glances, exhibited their skill and prowess in a very, very unconscious manner, and held hands and made the plans which would soon occasion other gatherings affording opportunities for other young couples to continue the cycle.

Once the farmer's land was cleared his struggle was only begun. Cultivating the ground with a plowshare of firehardened wood was a backbreaking ordeal. Even after use of the steel shovel plow became general, the task

lost coin. Jeremiah Friel, son of Daniel O'Priel who came from Ireland in 1740, was one of the champion reapers of the lower Pocahontas region. As the harvest season approached he and his four sons were always among the early arrivals at Squire Robert Gay's, whose wheat was usually first to ripen. When all had arrived the whole party would race, whooping and singing, into the fields. A dozen handfuls, ten stood on end and covered by the remaining two, made a sheaf. He who could leave the most sheaves in his wake was a man to be honored and respected.

From Gay's the harvesters would progress up the river, clearing each stand as they went, until James Bridger's was reached. From there they continued to the farms of William and John Sharp, then to Josiah Brown's and on until they finished Robert Moore's fields et Edray.

Exergencies were not infrequent. One evening at Friel's the harvesters were overtaken by evening before they could get all the cut grain into sheaves. The crew adjourned to the house, leaving the remaining wheat to be put up in the morning. Just as the men were retiring, weary and full of a harvest supper, Friel was alarmed to see the ominous flashing of a thunderstorm crowding in over the mountains. He immediately roused his

day's production. As the size of the crops was increased the threshing was done by freshly shod horses. The grain was spread on a heavy platform, and a small boy mounted on one horse would lead another tramping out the wheat. In this manner two or three teams could thresh 60 to 50 bushels a day. The wheat was then tossed into the air with a shovel, and the lighter chaff would blow away. The remainder was then shaken through a course seive; the chaff coming to the top was raked off by hand. This slow mothed gave way to the winnowing sheet which was tossed by two men while a third shook the grain into the sheet. The winnowing sheet continued in use until the development of the wheat fan. In 1839 William Gibson of Huntersville introduced the first crude threshing machine known as a "Chaff piler." This machine, operated by Jesse Whitmer and John Galford, was to the Pocahontas residents one of the first wonders of the world. Powered by four horses its threshing cylinder could spin out more grain than a herd of horses could have tramped out by the old method.

heartening problem. Many a crop produced little but fodder. John Johnson, a pioneer of West Marlinton whose cabin stood just below the bridge site, heard that corn had matured in Micholas County and secured a quantity of the seed. The tale of his adventures on this trip is typical of many that occurred in the trackless forests of the country's infancy. Upon his return he told of having becoming lost on Black Mountain and wandering about for nine days unable to find anything to eat save a small garter snake which he had been unable to force himself to swallow. Bear the point of collapse he finally came upon a cabin where he gasped out his story to the woman who

admitted him. She was upon the verge of serving him a hearty meal when her husband entered and averted her mistaken generosity. He fed the starved Johnson on small quantities of much and milk until the wanderer became sufficiently recovered to retain more solid foods. After several days of convalescence Johnson was able to continue his journey. The seed which he brought with him produced one of Marlinton's first crops.

hominy. Before the establishment of the water powered mills most of the corn was ground in hominy blocks which were nothing more than large mortars made from a section of tree trunk standing about waist high. The corn was placed in the burned-out hollow of the block and crushed with a heavy plunger. The finer meal was separated and used in baking the cakes, the courser grains either were pounded again or used as it was for hominy.

Fad the early resident of the county relied solely upon agriculture for his livelihood he would have starved within a few months. Hunting and trapping became as much a part of the farmer's routine as was the tending of his fields. A wide spread practice was that of getting up several hours before dawn and going into the woods with a rifle. The hunter was able to surprise deer and other game while it was still bedded down or just beginning to feed. Many hunters were able to bag tremendous amounts of game without being away from home overnight or losing many of the precious daylight hours from his farm work.

John E. Adkison used to tell many stories of more extended hunting expeditions. He related that on such trips the hunters seldom expected to see much game the first day out. However, after they had accustomed their senses

to the woods they were able to stalk and kill game with such skill that they soon had as much as they could carry home.

when John Barlow bought the property known as the "Brock place," he paid for it in venison at the rate of one half dollar per maddle or pair. He estimated that he had killed 1,500 deer during his hunting career. His most fruitful hunting day was one in which he killed mix deer and wounded the seventh. The trade in meat and furs was almost the only way that farmers along the Greenbrier could obtain the goods which they could not produce on their own land. The traders at Huntersville and Staunton enjoyed a tremendous business in which hardly any cash was ever seen. Cured meat and furs bought dress goods, hardware, kitchen utensils, lead, gun powder, and countless other commodities which could not easily be manufactured along the frontier.

of the things that would make their frontier life much more comfortable.

"Seng" was worth from 30 cents to 80 cents a pound when dried. It grew in comparative profusion throughout a large portion of the county. Numerous are the legendary seng patches where a man could dig himself a small fortune in a few weeks. Apparently there is one somewhere between the headwaters of Greenbrier and the Shavers Fork of Cheat which was discovered by a Union secuting party during the War between the States. The nephews of one of these soldiers, Jim and Sol Workman of Marlinton, set out to find this wondrous place where the stalks grew as thick as weeks over an area of two or three acres. Their uncle had described the patch as being on the boundary of an old, blazed line survey. Outside of Durbin they discovered such a boundary line and followed it for several days taking ginseng that they found along the way and

camping on the trail. At the end of a week they came upon the place only to discover that someone had preceded them by only a few days. However their trip was not at all unprofitable since the seng they had collected along the route brought approximately \$200 at the prices then current.

Sol and Jim made their trip to the fabled patch. Their father, A. J. Workman, bought a farm of 175 acres on Rock Run and paid for it by hunting ginseng which was then selling at 75% a pound. He was typical of the early farmers who thus supplemented the production of their farms by capitalizing on the natural resources to be found in the woods. From ginseng, golden seal, and seneca snake root he derived a cash income. Furs of mink and raccooms were traded for salt, sugar, coffee and similar commodities. The first white sugar sequired in one such exchange proved a marvelous novelty to the Workman children, who had never known any but the brown product which was boiled from the maple sap every year.

live stock gained new impetus. Sheep herders discovered that the county's abundance of large game enimals was now a distinct liability. Flocks were frequently wiped out by bears and welves which lurked in the uncut timber surrounding a large part of the pasturage in the county. Bounties of \$4.00 a head for bears and \$15.00 a head for welves were announced by Editor J. B. Canfield's Focahoutas Times on August 26, 1886. In that particular year 54 bears were proven for bounty - about the same number as have been killed in recent years in Focahoutas. A. M. V. Arbogast won top honors that year with a score of three bears and one welf. N. H. Collins proved four bears, and

James Sibson bagged three. James Sharp and C. C. Arbogast trailed the leaders with two bears eaches Will Point, Nathan Margess, generally of the Little

heavy steel traps or log snares. The few wolves killed in Pocehontas were killed by poisoned beit or were trapped in pyramid-shaped pens. These ingenious traps were baited with old or crippled sheep and left open at the top. The wolf oculd scramble up the inclined walls and leap upon the ill-fated bait, but when he was ready to leave he would discover that the opening was too high for him to reach.

bears. Powerful Francis McCoy wrestled a seven foot bear through the laurel thickets and stone rubble of Black Mountain for several eternally long minutes before his hunting partner, the Reverend Asa Shinn McNeill, could sefely bring his gun to point on the tumbling monster. Lame Paw and Old bellion, largest outlaws killed in Pocahontas, terrorized stockmen for years before irste hunters finally brought them to bay.

of Pocahontes life changed tremendously. The destitute pioneers who had risked their lives for the privilege of scraping out the barest existence in the new land were now settled, moderately prosperous farmers. Relieved of the constant threat of starvation they turned to the problem of gratifying their desire for easier, more comfortable living. Richard Hill bired the Kennison brothers to build him a house which was the show place of the Little Levels. The Reverend John Faugh, a skillful blacksmith, found business booming as his neighbors became dissatisfied with their makeshift tools and flocked to buy

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his hoes and pitch forks and well-tempered exes. William Mayse was kept
busy in his smithy at Mill Point. Nathan Burgess, gunsmith of the Little
Levels, produced custom-made rifles, and his brother, John, a skilled carpenter, found new prosperity in his trade as people called upon him to build
new houses and barns which a few years before would have been raised by
their own hands.

Michael Daugherty, Peter Lightner, Daniel Kerr, and a score of others
built their water powered mills along the Pocahontas streams, and the demand
for well-ground meel and flour kept their burrs turning and doomed the hand
mill and hominy blook to a fast-receding past. Saws and powder mills were
added to many of these establishments, and laboriously hewn timbers gave way
to sawed lumber while powder became more easily available. William Civey
of Anthony Creek developed one of several tan years which gave the Pocahontas
farmers good leather for shoes and harness. The Shraders also became famous
for their leather.

turned to stock raising. The limestone soil produced rich pasturage with a minimum of cultivation in contrast to the disheartening struggle of the early farmers to wrest decent crops from the rolling land. Cattle, sheep and horses of unexcelled quality carried the fame of the county to surrounding states. Lee's famous mount, Traveler, was foaled in Posshontas' own Little Levels. Large farms such as that of the Tarmicks prospered on the new diversification. Slaves gave the region a new likeness to the parent settlements.

Huntersville merchants often realized more than 300 per cent on their

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the States. The strings of pack horses brought the latest goods and returned to Staunton with the meat, hides, and other products of the new section. Unable to meet the growing trade they gave way grudgingly to the wagon trains which coursed the new roads. Travelers' Repose, in the northern part of the county became a famous stopping point for east-west travel.

The wagon trains developed a society all their own. Tough, wiry men, the drivers thrived on the hard trips through mud and rain and burning sum. If one bogged down, the next to come along worked and sweated and drove his team to their utmost endurance to help the stranded freighter. The ribald whooping, cursing and singing with which they broke the monotony of the trips scandalized the quiet folk along the road. Hundreds of men such as Fred Beard, John Gay, Paul Sharp and his sons Edgar and Ellis, Bill, Sam and Page Gay, Taylor Moore, Lloyd Reed, the Dilleys - Andrew, John, Amos and Willie, Dave Moore, Lac Irvine, John Clarkson, John Grimes and Sam Freeman piloted the broad-tired, high-bowed freighters which were the heart of Pocahontas' traffic with the outside world. Not until the twentieth century brought the railroads to the county's door did freighters give way to the rush of the rachine era.

Pocahontas did not succumb to the industrialization that set in in the later part of the nineteenth century. The St. Lawrence Boom and Manufacturing Company took out millions of feet of white pine, but the rich forests remained as if untouched. A small coal mine was opened at Briary Knob in the late 80's to supply fuel for St. Lawrence's logging locomotive which had been hauled in on wagons. The county was found to be rich in coal, building stone,

and other natural resources.

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Rich though it was in such natural resources the county entered the twentieth century still as a quiet, farming, stock-raising community. Cereal grains, garden truck, live stock and the traditional forest products remained the prime concern of the citizens. The creaking water mills continued to grind, and the husky, hill-bred horses withstood the challenge of the new horseless carriages. 1910 saw the industrial revolution barely touching the unhurried life of Pocahontas.

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